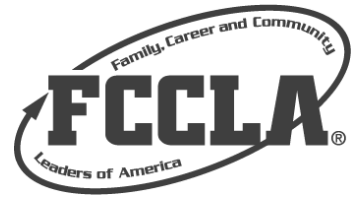




SPRING 2025

NJ FCCLA



NEW DIRECTIONS

CONNECTING NJ ONE CHAPTER AT A TIME



President's Address

Dear New Jersey FCCLA Members, Advisers, and Alumni:

Spring is here, and summer is just around the corner! The sun is shining, flowers are blooming, and it's the perfect time to grow—not just outside, but as leaders too. Although the school year is ending, it does not mean it is time to give up on your commitment to being a leader and responsible member of your community and family.

This year, we've done amazing things together. We started strong with Leadership Bootcamp, worked hard at the State Leadership Conference, and made a big difference through service. However, we're not done yet! From July 4 to July 10, our top STAR Event competitors from the New Jersey FCCLA State Leadership Conference will represent New Jersey at the National Leadership Conference in Orlando, Florida, a city bursting with adventure, excitement, and opportunity.

Orlando isn't just home to iconic destinations like Walt Disney World, Universal Studios, and the ICON Orlando Wheel, it's a place where New Jersey's members have the opportunity to Dream. Believe. and Succeed. Our members will be extending themselves by competing in the National STAR Events, networking with members across the nation, and bonding with their chapter while bringing back great ideas to implement in their own organization.

As we enjoy the warmer days, this is your chance to stay inspired. Use this season to try new ideas, connect with your community, and contemplate next year's goals. Whether you're traveling to Orlando or leading from your local chapter, take pride in FCCLA. Let your actions this spring and summer reflect leadership, service, and the spirit of our organization. Look for NJ FCCLA social media posts and stay connected to what is happening with the state officers.

Thank you for making this year unforgettable. Your dedication and enthusiasm make NJ FCCLA stronger every day. Good luck as you finish your classes, and best wishes for a season full of learning, leadership, and fun. We hope to see you in Orlando!

With appreciation,

Malav Shah

2024-2025 NJ FCCLA State President

Brian Muirhead

2025-2026 NJ FCCLA State President



Gardening for Fun and Good Health

By: Ria Kotteswaran, VP of Leadership

Post-pandemic is a world where mental health has finally come to people's attention. The concern for good overall health is real. There is a way to positively impact both your physical and mental health and that is through the adventures of gardening.

The practice of gardening has existed for approximately 12,000 years. Gardening is "the activity which involves cultivating and caring for plants, and maintaining the garden's aesthetic appeal." While that may be the way many people perceive gardening there is so much more than what meets the eye. Gardening is an activity for the mind and the body, it connects our inner soul with nature and relaxes the mind, leaving you in a state of Zen.

Gardening for Fun

Taking the time to garden can help bring out the best in you and in your character. Just taking the time to connect with nature and help cultivate plants, centers you and helps you recollect yourself. Many people find it very calming, getting your hands a little dirty, hearing the birds chirp around you, and watching something you planted begin to grow. Gardening does not have to be all about fruits and vegetables, you can express your creativity through flower beds or even themed gardens like butterfly or herb gardens. The options are boundless, you just have to let yourself relax as you become one with nature.

Gardening For Health

Beyond the joy it brings, gardening offers real health benefits both mental and physical. Spending time outdoors in the sun provides a healthy dose of vitamin D, which boosts your immune system. With gardening comes a workout; digging, planting, and weeding can burn calories, build strength and even lower your blood pressure. It's a great way to stay active without the pressure of traditional workouts. Even better news, growing your own herbs, vegetables or fruits means you're likely to eat fresh, nutritious food, something your body will definitely appreciate.

Gardening can reap delicious and nutritious fruits and vegetables for your family to eat, as well as positively impact the environment. So grab your gloves, dig in, and let gardening grow on you. It might just become your favorite way to recharge, refresh, and reconnect with nature and yourself.



Service Ambassador Opportunity for 2025-2026

By: Liam Chang, VP of Membership

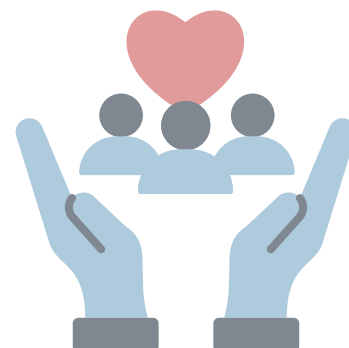
Leadership is one of the fundamental pillars that builds our communities—locally, nationally, and globally. The people who are willing to take initiative, the individuals who lead, are the ones who hold our communities together. Leaders pave the way for a better future for us all. Students are often searching for meaningful leadership experiences. Being president of a school organization is one thing, but making a difference and creating change to help those around you is a very different opportunity.

It is hard to come by these experiences in most organizations. However, one opportunity that NJ FCCLA provides for leadership development is the Service Ambassador Program, a program made for FCCLA members who wish to make a difference. The Service Ambassador is a program made for the leaders of tomorrow, where those who partake are taken seriously for who they are, and are appreciated for the work they do.

The Service Ambassadors program is in its "infancy" as it was launched this school year. One of the goals of the program is to recenter the foundation of NJ FCCLA. During the pandemic, understandably, people focused on themselves and their family. Now that this difficult part of our history is in the past, NJ FCCLA wants our members to focus on the needs of our communities. Community is the second C in FCCLA; Community is one of FCCLA's pillars. NJ FCCLA strives to make our community better through leadership and service. This is exactly why the Service Ambassadors program is NJ FCCLA's most important initiative.

Individuals are selected for the program by their chapter advisers. That is where interested members can find an application in the fall. One service ambassador is allowed per chapter, representing the service efforts of their own chapters as part of FCCLA. These ambassadors will attend monthly zoom meetings to discuss service initiatives, conferences, etc...

One of the best parts about this program is the opportunity to network with other like-minded individuals throughout the state. Leaders are given the chance to speak with other leaders and take charge in their schools to work toward our service initiatives. If your chapter has a leadership position dedicated to service, then the Service Ambassador position is a perfect fit for you. Many schools in our state did not nominate a chapter member to serve this year. So, if your chapter did not have a Service Ambassador, please, talk to your adviser, to see if your chapter can participate next year. What's stopping you from being a leader?





Safe Driving

By Liam Chang, VP of Membership

It is estimated that at least 120 fatalities happen every day due to car crashes in the United States, an extremely alarming number. With summer break coming up, many are excited to get out there and drive, especially teens who have their license for the first time this summer season. With new drivers on the road, and busier streets with more people traveling, it can be tough to ensure safety. However, with a few simple precautions, reducing those chances for a crash will come easy. Here are just a few tips to be a safer driver.

1. Keep Distractions Minimal!

Driving can be tricky on its own, but adding distractions can make the task even more difficult. Distracted driving accounts for almost 25% of accidents. Distractions include passengers in the car, conversations, music, etc... Of course, these distractions are not entirely avoidable but take precaution when doing so. Ask friends or family to talk lower or remain silent while driving, don't blast your summer playlist as loud as you would, and definitely do not drive while using any handheld device. By keeping distractions minimal you can reduce chances of a crash significantly, and be a safer, better driver.

2. Wear Your Seatbelt!

Wearing your seatbelt is the law, and it is such a simple solution to reducing the chance of a fatal injury during a crash. Seat Belts help keep people safe as they are said to reduce the risk of injury during a crash by 45%. So, click that belt into place.

3. Educate Yourself!

Being aware of the risks of driving and what you can do to improve is one of if not the most important way to become a safer driver. Programs like the Safe Roads Challenge app can help you get practice analyzing your driving performance and better understand what you can do to be a better driver.

Safe driving is the only way to reduce the chance of fatalities not only for yourself, but for our communities. By keeping distractions minimal, wearing your seatbelt, and educating yourself on safe driving, you can help save lives. Be a better driver, be a safer driver, and keep those in our community protected from fatal crashes.



CREATIVE SUMMER JOBS

By: Shridhar Garg, VP of Parliamentary Law

Summer is a great time to gain work experience, build new skills, and earn extra money. While traditional jobs like retail or food service are common, there are many creative opportunities that can be more flexible, enjoyable, and even tailored to your interests. Exploring different types of summer jobs can help you discover new talents and make the most of your time off.

1. Offer a Service in Your Community

Think about services people often need during the summer. You could offer pet sitting, lawn care, tutoring, or helping neighbors with basic tech support. These jobs are flexible and allow you to work independently. Start by advertising your services through flyers, local groups, or word of mouth.

2. Sell Handmade or Custom Items

If you enjoy making things, consider selling crafts, jewelry, artwork, or custom t-shirts. Online platforms or local markets are good places to start. You can also take custom orders from people you know. This type of job lets you be creative while earning money.

3. Start a Small Business

Running a small business during the summer can be a great learning experience. You could sell baked goods, start a car-washing service, or organize local events. Even simple ideas can grow with the right effort and organization. Be sure to plan carefully and keep track of your earnings and expenses.

4. Freelance Online

If you have skills like writing, graphic design, or video editing, consider freelancing. Many websites allow beginners to take on small projects. This kind of work can often be done from home and on your own schedule, making it convenient for summer.

5. Assist with Events or Camps

Summer is full of camps, festivals, and community events. Many of these activities need extra help with organizing, guiding participants, or setting up activities. Look for opportunities with local recreation centers, libraries, or clubs.

A creative summer job is more than just a way to earn money—it's a chance to learn responsibility, gain experience, and discover what you enjoy. With a little planning and initiative, you can find or create a job that's both productive and rewarding.



COOKING AND EATING ON A BUDGET

By: Shridhar Garg, VP of Parliamentary Law

Learning how to cook and eat on a budget is an important life skill. It allows you to save money, reduce waste, and still enjoy healthy and satisfying meals. With a few smart habits and a bit of planning, it's easy to stay within your budget without sacrificing quality.

1. Plan Your Meals

Planning your meals in advance is one of the best ways to stay organized and avoid unnecessary spending. Before you go grocery shopping, make a list of meals you want to prepare for the week and write down only the ingredients you need. This helps you avoid impulse purchases and keeps your meals balanced and varied.

2. Cook in Batches

Preparing food in larger portions can save both time and money. Meals like pasta, soup, rice dishes, or casseroles are easy to make in bulk. Store leftovers in the fridge or freezer for future meals. This reduces the need to cook every day and helps prevent waste.

3. Use Basic Ingredients

You don't need expensive or hard-to-find ingredients to make good meals. Simple items like rice, eggs, canned beans, frozen vegetables, and pasta can be turned into a wide variety of dishes. Learning how to use these ingredients in different ways makes cooking more flexible and affordable.

4. Be a Smart Shopper

Look for sales, compare prices, and consider store-brand products, which are usually cheaper than name brands but similar in quality. Try to avoid shopping when you're hungry, as this can lead to buying items you don't really need. Sticking to your shopping list is key to staying on budget.

5. Limit Eating Out

Eating at restaurants or ordering takeout can get expensive quickly. Cooking at home gives you full control over what goes into your meals and saves a lot of money over time. It's also a great way to build your cooking skills and try new recipes.

Cooking and eating on a budget doesn't mean giving up enjoyable meals. It's about making thoughtful choices, planning ahead, and using what you have wisely. By following these tips, you can eat well, stay healthy, and keep your spending under control.



GCIT Meatball Cookoff: A Delicious Chapter Fundraiser



The GCIT Meatball Cookoff was organized by Sofia Scavetta, a senior in the Baking and Pastry Arts program at GCIT. It was inspired by a chili competition held during her freshman year. The event was both fun and educational, offering lessons in competition, time management, and teamwork. Motivated by this experience, Sofia decided to bring a similar event to her school, with an Italian twist, a meatball cookoff. The goal was to give everyone the chance to participate while also giving back to the community.

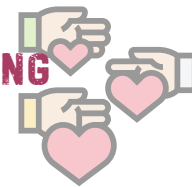
After raising funds throughout the year, the team decided to donate a portion of the profits to Covenant House. Sofia first learned about Covenant House through FCCLA and was inspired to support their cause. Funds were raised through the sale of tokens which were used in the voting process on favorite meatballs. These events also have massive raffle opportunities. To keep costs low, local businesses were approached for donations, which would also give them free advertising. Many businesses eagerly contributed. The event was a success, with over \$2,010 raised. Half of the proceeds, \$1,005, was donated to Covenant House while the other half of the money was retained to support the chapter's participation in FCCLA conferences.

For other chapters interested in hosting a similar event, it's recommended to reach out to students early to ensure enough competitors. Selecting a date that works for everyone and planning ahead are key for smooth execution. Organizers should also secure volunteers for roles beyond cooking, such as selling tokens and tickets, to ensure everything runs smoothly. Overall, the event was a huge success, and it is highly recommended for any chapter that is looking for opportunities to combine leadership and community service.





END-OF-YEAR FUNDRAISING IDEAS FOR NJ FCCLA



By: Siya Patel, VP of Communications

Power of One

By: Shridhar Garg, VP of
Parliamentary Law

Summer is the perfect time to take on new challenges, reflect on your personal growth, and try something rewarding. FCCLA's Power of One program gives you the chance to do all of that—and more. It's a self-paced national program that helps you build leadership, set goals, and make a real difference in your life and community. And the best part? You can complete it at your own pace, even during your summer break. Discuss your goals with your adviser. Advisers are responsible for checking your goals and outcomes.

1. Make the Most of Free Time

Summer usually brings a more flexible schedule. With fewer school responsibilities, it's easier to focus on personal goals. Power of One gives you five projects to complete, each designed to help you explore your strengths, make improvements, and lead positive change. You can work on a little bit each week—at home, on vacation, or even while hanging out at the park.

2. Connect with Your Interests

Each Power of One unit encourages you to focus on something meaningful. Whether it's improving your habits, building stronger relationships, or giving back to your community, the program allows you to choose goals that matter to you. If you enjoy journaling, organizing, or even trying out new hobbies, you'll find that Power of One naturally fits into your summer activities.

3. Stand Out and Grow

Completing Power of One demonstrates dedication, leadership, and a desire to grow—all things that colleges, employers, and scholarship committees value. It also helps build confidence and gives you a real sense of accomplishment. Starting now gives you plenty of time to finish before the school year begins.

4. Make an Impact This Summer

Use your free time to start something meaningful. You can set a personal fitness goal, volunteer for a cause you care about, help your family or friends improve something in their lives, or learn a new skill. Every action you take through Power of One can make your summer more impactful and purposeful.

Don't let the summer go by without doing something powerful. Power of One is more than just a project—it's a chance to improve yourself, make a difference, and enjoy the process along the way. If you've ever thought about completing a national program, this is the perfect one to start with. Take the first step and make this summer one to remember.

As the school year winds down, NJ FCCLA chapters have a great opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments and prepare for future success through creative end-of-year fundraisers. These fundraisers not only help cover important costs such as travel for the National Leadership Meeting, competitions, conferences, and project materials, but they also play a key role in sustaining and growing each chapter. By participating, students build valuable leadership, communication, and organizational skills—core elements of the FCCLA experience. A well-funded chapter also gains the flexibility to explore bigger opportunities, host impactful events, and give back to the community in meaningful ways, ensuring the year ends on a strong and positive note.

Host a spring market or a craft fair: Bring your community together by organizing a local market featuring student-made crafts, baked goods, and small business vendors. Charge a small admission fee or rent table space at school or a park. It's a great way to support local talent and showcase FCCLA's commitment to entrepreneurship and community connection!

Car wash or "Clean-Up for a Cause": Looking for a recreational and exhilarating spring fundraiser? Car washes are easy to plan and a hit with the community. Having your chapter come together and volunteer to wash cars at school can help raise money and unify your chapter.

Partner with local restaurants for "Dine to Donate" nights: Work with local restaurants to host a fundraising night where a percentage of the evening's proceeds go back to your chapter. These events are a great way to strengthen family ties and broader connections with the community.

Silent Disco Night: Rent wireless headphones and host a silent disco at your school or community center. Attendees pay an entrance fee and can tune into different playlists (hip-hop, pop, throwbacks – you name it!)

Sewing Workshop Fundraiser: Bring creativity and community together with a sewing workshop fundraiser! Chapters can charge an entrance fee for participants to make fun projects like tote bags or scrunchies, all while learning hands-on sewing skills from FCCLA officers/members. It's a fantastic way to showcase FCCLA's focus on fashion and design, spark creativity, and raise funds for chapter goals!

Bake, Decorate, Donate: Chapters can host a cupcake decorating event to combine creativity and culinary skills. By charging an entrance fee, participants can learn piping techniques, frosting designs, and decorating tips while decorating their own cupcakes. FCCLA officers/members can take the lead and promise a fun time with friends to participants all while fundraising for their chapter.



The Importance of Social Media

By: Siya Patel, VP of Communications



In today's digital world, social media isn't just a tool- it's a powerhouse for communication, connection, and growth. For FCCLA chapters across New Jersey, using social media effectively can boost membership, showcase accomplishments, and inspire others to get involved.

Why Social Media Matters: Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook allow chapters to highlight their work, events, and community service projects. A strong online presence helps your chapter stand out, gain recognition, and reach potential members who may not be aware of what FCCLA is all about.

Top 5 Tips for Effective Use:

- **Stay Active** – Consistency is key. Post regularly about meetings, fundraisers, competitions, and achievements.
- **Use Visuals** – Photos and videos catch attention. Show your members in action to bring your chapter to life!
- **Highlight Members** – Shoutout members for their hard work and dedication. For example, have a member of the month recognizing a new member every month for their dedication to FCCLA.
- **Engage Your Audience** – Don't just post- interact! Respond to comments, like and share other FCCLA chapters' content. Use fun and relatable tools like polls, Q&As, and stories to interact with your followers.
- **Stay Consistent with Branding** – Consistent branding helps your chapter stand out and look professional. Use official FCCLA colors, logos, and hashtags to create a recognizable and unified presence across all social media platforms.

Social media is more than just likes and shares- it's a way to build your chapters' brand and legacy. When used wisely, it can turn followers into members and supporters into leaders. So grab your phone, get creative, and show the world what your chapters are all about!



Chapters Blooming all over New Jersey

By: Pragya Bhatia, First Vice President

This past State Leadership Conference, the State Executive Council was honored to announce this year's Red Rose Chapters. This great accomplishment awards chapters all around New Jersey for their efforts in membership, service, and engagement. All the chapters who achieved this prestigious award had to meet the following minimum requirements:

1. **Increase chapter membership**
2. **Participation of at least 8 members to the Fall Leadership Connection**
3. **Participation of at least 4 fall competitive events**
4. **Attendance at Leadership Bootcamp**
5. **Participation in the State Leadership Conference**
6. **Participation in the competitive events at SLC**
7. **Have at least 5 members complete Power of One**
8. **Host two service initiatives**
9. **Advocate the New Directions newsletter by delivering to school administration**

Along with this, these qualified chapters further completed a minimum of twenty points, which are listed on the njfccla.org website ("Membership" > "Red Rose Chapter Award"). These chapters have gone above and beyond in creating unity in their chapter—some initiatives have included teacher appreciation through FCS-themed letters templates, hosting pancake breakfasts as fundraisers, managing a lip-sync block party, and even creating hand-made blankets for the infants in the NICU.

Congratulations to the following chapters:

- Edison High School
- Gloucester County Institute of Technology
- Hunterdon County PolyTech
- John Adams Middle School
- John F. Kennedy Memorial High School
- John P. Stevens High School
- Newark Vocational High School

The Red Rose Chapter Award recipients have proven their dedication to New Jersey FCCLA. With so much passion, power, and participation, these chapters truly represent all that FCCLA and FCS education has to offer.





Who is Edna Amidon?

By: Pragya Bhatia,
First Vice President

Edna P. Amidon passed down her legacy with the founding of the Future Homemakers of America (FHA) in 1945, which is now known as a Career and Technical Student Organization, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). To understand our organization better, we must look to its roots.

American Educator and federal official, Edna P. Amidon was chief of the Home Economics Education Service of the United States Office of Education from 1938 to 1964. She dedicated her life to advocating for Family and Consumer sciences, receiving the Superior Service Award in 1963 from the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

If Ms. Amidon was asked to answer the question, “Why should I take a family and consumer science course?,” she would answer along the lines of broadening horizons, having new and original experiences, and creating a foundation that is necessary for the development of a good home. But to choose which class, she would tell you to follow your unique interests. All of them develop patience, leadership, and essential skills for life as you move along your path.

FCCLA creates a countless amount of opportunities for students to reach their full potential in leadership, service, and competitive spheres. Through creating a “family” in FCCLA chapters, networking across the nation, and learning about local initiatives through community service, members have the opportunity of a lifetime.



Tips for Summer Travel

By: Avadhi Baid, VP of Programs

Summer is the perfect time to leave your everyday routine and explore new places. The heat, crowds, and peak prices, traveling during the summer can become its own challenge. Whether you're going to the beach, mountains, or a new city, here are some tips to make summer travel easier.

Summer is also known as peak travel season, so flights, hotels, and attraction sights sell out fast. Booking early, whether it being a few months, weeks or even days in advance, can help save money. Speaking of money, set a daily budget to avoid overspending. Tourist areas are known for having inflated prices. Look for free activities, try local public transportation, and eat at small family-run restaurants to save money. Try adjusting your travel schedule to travel midweek or slightly before or after major holidays. This will help you find cheaper flights and fewer crowds. But, long travel days can leave you hungry. Pack easy snacks like granola bars, nuts, or dried fruit for a quick energy boost.

Pack lightweight and breathable clothing. Also pack versatile clothing so you can mix and match. Summer sun can be very harmful for the skin. Make sure to pack sunscreen and reapply it every few hours. Don't forget sunglasses and a hat for extra protection and style! Planning outdoor activities for early morning or late afternoons when it's much cooler is also a great idea. A reusable water bottle is also super crucial! If you are traveling to a warm or cooler location always carry a water bottle. Hot weather and long days outdoors can dehydrate you fast. Maybe even bring multiple water bottles if you're sightseeing or hiking. Places like airports and some cities now offer free water refill stations. Don't forget the necessary travel-sized toiletries. Although at times it is hard, try to stick to a carry-on because it can not only save time at the airport but also helps avoid the risk of lost luggage.

Stay aware of local safety tips for the places you plan to travel. Carry copies of important documents and consider getting travel insurance in case of emergencies. Pack a travel sized first aid kit that includes essentials like band-aids, pain relievers, allergy medicine, bug spray, and any additional personal prescriptions. It's always better to be safe than sorry. Summer weather is known to be unpredictable. Keep an eye on the daily forecast and have backup indoor plans in case of rain or storms. Make sure to prioritize comfort as comfortable shoes are a must if you plan on doing a lot of walking. Consider layering your outfits. Especially for places where temperatures drop at night. Lastly, take lots of photos and videos, but don't forget to put the phone down and experience the moment. The best travel memories come from being fully there, not just behind a screen.

Wherever you're headed stay safe, have fun and make memories that last a lifetime!



Best Beach Reads for Teens: (Books You Won't Want to Put Down)

By: Avadhi Baid, VP of Programs

Whether you're relaxing under the sun or listening to waves crash, a good book makes any beach day better. If you're looking for stories that match the summer vibe, here are a few teen-appropriate books that are perfect for your next beach trip.

1. **The Summer I Turned Pretty** by Jenny Han

If you haven't read this one yet, you're in for a treat. Belly's summers are always the same...until everything changes. Two brothers, one beach house, and a girl who finally gets noticed. Warning: this love triangle might just make or break your heart.

2. **Love & Gelato** by Jenna Evans Welch

Taking place in Italy, this book feels like a vacation in itself. Lina goes to Florence to fulfill her mom's dying wish. While she's there she ends up not only uncovering secrets she finds romance, and eats a lot of gelato!

3. **One of Us Is Lying** by Karen M. McManus

This twisty thriller starts with five students in detention...and ends with one of them dead! Who's lying? Who's hiding what? There is so much to be understood about all the characters you won't be able to stop flipping pages.

4. **Tweet Cute** by Emma Lord

This rom-com is ridiculously charming. Two teens from rival family restaurants have a Twitter war and don't realize they're also falling for each other in real life through an anonymous app.

5. **To All the Boys I've Loved Before** by Jenny Han

Yes, another Jenny Han classic! When Lara Jean's secret love letters accidentally get mailed, her life gets caught into a fake relationship that just happens to become more real than she expected.

6. **Today Tonight Tomorrow** by Rachel Lynn Solomon

Enemies-to-lovers fans, this one's for you. Rowan and Neil have been academic rivals forever. On their last day of senior year, they're forced to team up for a scavenger hunt. This causes them to start seeing each other in a totally different perspective. It's a perfect enemies to lovers plot!

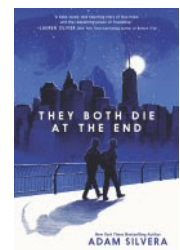
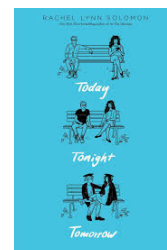
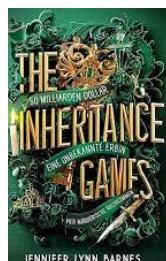
7. **The Inheritance Games** by Jennifer Lynn Barnes

A random girl inherits a billionaire's fortune. But first, she has to solve a mystery filled with puzzles, live in a mansion full of secret passages, and deal with the billionaire's suspicious (and good-looking) grandsons.

8. **They Both Die at the End** by Adam Silvera

Yes, the title gives it away. This book is more about how two strangers live their last day to the fullest. It's emotional, beautifully written, and surprisingly hopeful. It explores friendship, time, and what really matters when the end is near.

So, grab your sunscreen, a towel, and one (or more) of these books—because nothing says summer like getting completely lost in a story. From romance and drama, shocking mysteries, adventure, friendship, twisty plots, coming-of-age journeys, or summer crushes, these books have you covered.





Leadership Bootcamp Recap!



By: Mehak Patel, VP of Parliamentary Law

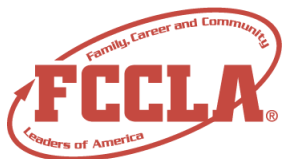
The 2025 New Jersey FCCLA Leadership BootCamp was a truly unforgettable experience for everyone who attended. Held virtually, the event exceeded previous records with an unprecedented number of participants. The energy and engagement among members was palpable. Chapters from across the state came together in virtual watch parties to participate in the enriching experience, bonding over their shared goals and leadership journeys.

The BootCamp was led by Ms. Catherine DiGioia-Weinfeld and Mr. Bill Plastine, who guided members through a variety of dynamic and interactive activities. Their thoughtful planning and enthusiasm ensured that the session was educational and inspirational. Attendees had the opportunity to explore key leadership principles, strengthen their public speaking and team collaboration skills, and reflect on their roles within their chapters and communities.

Each participant received a long-sleeved T-shirt to wear during the event. Additionally, all attendees were given a copy of "Sometimes You Win, Sometimes You Learn" by John C. Maxwell. This book served as a cornerstone of the Leadership Boot Camp experience, introducing students to the concept of a growth mindset. Maxwell's work emphasizes that setbacks are not failures but opportunities for growth - an idea that allows FCCLA members to become stronger leaders.

Another exciting highlight of the Boot Camp was the introduction of the FreeRice competition. This friendly competition not only encouraged members to test their knowledge across various subjects but also allowed them to contribute to a meaningful cause. The initiative has shown tremendous success. (See article below for more information about FreeRice!)

In every way, the 2025 Leadership Boot Camp achieved its goal of inspiring, educating, and uniting FCCLA members across New Jersey. With a strong start to the year, members are now more motivated than ever to apply their new skills and mindset to their chapters and communities.



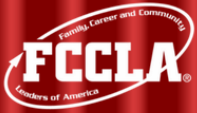
2025-2026 SAVE THE DATE

Fall Leadership Connection – November 24, 2025 – Edison, NJ

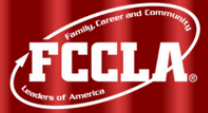
Leadership Bootcamp – January 10, 2026 virtual from your school

State Leadership Conference – March 25-26 Cherry Hill, NJ

National Leadership Conference – July 6-10, 2026 – Washington, D.C.



How to become an Active **FCCLA** Alumni

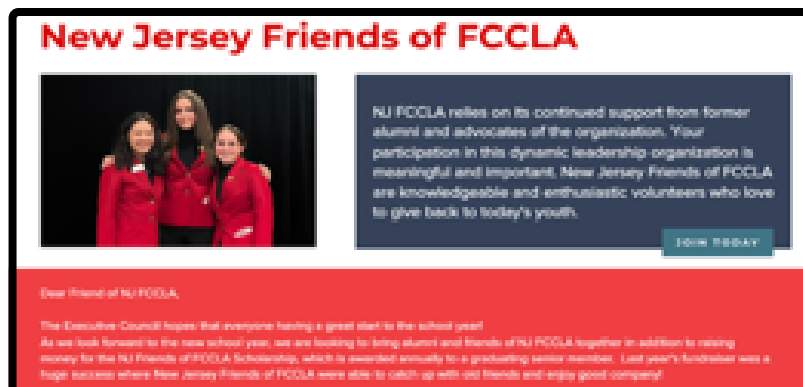
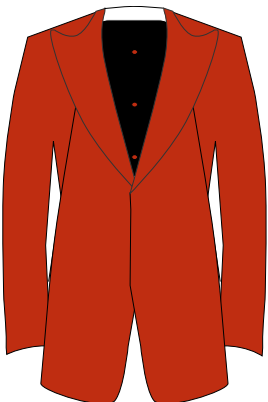


By: Mehak Patel, VP of Parliamentary Law

Graduating doesn't mean your FCCLA journey has to end. As an alum, you can continue to support your chapter, inspire current members, and stay connected with the organization that helped shape your leadership skills. Here are a few ways to stay involved:

- **Stay in touch with your chapter adviser** Maintain communication with your adviser and offer support for chapter events and meetings.
- **Volunteer at state and chapter events** Whether it's judging a competition, helping with workshops, or mentoring students from your chapter, your experience is valuable.
- **Offer guidance to current members** Share your FCCLA experiences, tips, and advice to help inspire and mentor new leaders.
- **Join New Jersey Friends of FCCLA, the NJ FCCLA Alumni Network** This official network keeps you connected to updates, opportunities, and fellow alumni.
- **Advocate for FCCLA in Your Community** Promote the organization in your community to expand its reach and impact.

Being an active alumni means continuing to lead and give back. Your journey with FCCLA can continue long after graduation - just in a new and meaningful way.



NJ FCCLA Takes on “FreeRice” Challenge

By: Malav Shah, 2024-2025 State President

New Jersey FCCLA members showed their dedication to service and global impact through an incredible community effort during the 2025 Free Rice Competition, earning over 8 million grains of rice to support the United Nations World Food Program (WFP). The competition launched during Leadership Bootcamp and wrapped up on Day of Service during FCCLA Week, uniting chapters across the state for a meaningful cause.

Free Rice is a free, web-based trivia game that allows users to answer questions on a variety of topics—from vocabulary to geography. For each correct answer, 10 grains of rice are donated through the UN WFP to help fight hunger around the world. By combining education with service, Free Rice empowers anyone to make a real difference with just a few minutes of their time.

What makes this initiative so impactful is its accessibility! It requires no money, just a bit of time and a willingness to learn. Through online community service like Free Rice, students across the state were able to contribute in a fun, easy, and rewarding way.

The competition saw participation from countless individuals who worked together toward this amazing milestone. Congratulations to John P. Stevens High School, who earned the highest amount and helped lead the charge in the fight against hunger.

This year’s Free Rice competition exemplifies NJ FCCLA’s commitment to leadership, service, and global citizenship. Every grain earned represents more than just a correct answer...it reflects the power of youth to make a real-world impact!

As we celebrate this incredible achievement, NJ FCCLA encourages members to continue finding innovative, accessible ways to serve, proving that small actions can lead to big change.



1	 Virendra - JPS Rice: 4275880
2	 JPS.Rajaganes.Srinivasan Rice: 3134210
3	 JRO/MSophias Rice: 10010
4	 ehyashavikompela Rice: 45240
4	 EHSKuanM Rice: 45240
6	 ehseshan(haverl) Rice: 44750
7	 ehsasini Rice: 43380
8	 JPSPrana Rice: 40980
9	 ehsstriya Rice: 24000
10	 ehsmaht Rice: 23900



New Jersey FCCLA 2025

Grains of rice donated so far

8,560,520

Overall group rank

247

Building a Strong Chapter Officer Team: From Roles to Real Results

By: Stuti Shah, 2024-2025 First Vice President

Serving as a chapter officer is more than holding a title; it is about leading with intention and working as a team to help your chapter thrive. No team reaches its full potential without investing in trust, connection, and a shared vision. Start by building a strong foundation.

1. Start with Connection, Not Just Position

Strong teams are built on relationships. Before diving into responsibilities, get to know each other. Host a team retreat or day-long meet-up. Share why you ran for office and what you hope to contribute. Establish open communication and create space for every voice.

2. Define a Shared Vision

Teams need more than a task list—they need direction. Work together to define your goals for the year. What should your chapter be known for? What impact do you want to have? How will you support each other? A unified vision brings purpose to your work.

3. Communicate with Purpose

Set expectations early about how you’ll stay in touch, resolve issues, and follow through on commitments. Hold regular meetings and use planning tools to stay organized. Encourage open, respectful feedback so every officer feels valued and heard.

4. Celebrate Strengths and Support Growth

Every officer has unique strengths. Identify them early and assign tasks accordingly. Be open about areas for improvement and learn together. Pair up on projects, offer constructive feedback, and recognize each other’s contributions to maintain motivation and accountability.

5. Build Traditions That Keep You Connected

Keeping morale high throughout the year takes effort. Build in consistent team traditions—monthly leadership check-ins, milestone celebrations, or a gratitude journal. These moments reinforce your bond and remind everyone they’re part of something meaningful.

Final Thoughts

Great officer teams don’t form by accident. They are built through trust, effort, and shared purpose. When officers communicate well and support one another, they create a team others want to follow. Invest in your team—and watch your chapter grow stronger because of it.



Meet the 2025-2026 State Executive Council

BY: STUTI SHAH, 2024-2025 FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Brian Muirhead | Southern Regional HS- State President
Favorite FCCLA Memory: His favorite FCCLA opportunity is networking! He loves meeting people from all walks of life, especially passionate members from the Garden State.

Pragya Bhatia | Edison High School - First Vice President
Favorite FCCLA Memory: Her favorite FCCLA memory is attending the 2024 National Leadership Conference where she bonded with her fellow state officers.

Liam Chang | JFK Memorial High School - VP of Membership
Favorite FCCLA Memory: His favorite FCCLA memory is going to SLC for the first time with his chapter. He remembers working hard with his peers and the awards session!

Mishree Patel | JFK Memorial HS- VP of Community Service
Favorite FCCLA Memory: Her favorite FCCLA memory would be her high school's lip sync battle this year. She and her friends did an impromptu dance in funny costumes.

Shridhar Garg | JP Stevens HS - VP of Parliamentary Law
Favorite FCCLA Memory: His favorite FCCLA memory is attending the 2023 National Leadership Conference, in Denver, Colorado. It was an amazing experience.

Siya Patel | JP Stevens HS - VP of Communication
Favorite FCCLA Memory: Her favorite FCCLA memory was attending her first NLC in Seattle. It was her first time being far from home, and it really opened her eyes to all the opportunities FCCLA can offer.

Ria Kottesawaran | JP Stevens HS - VP of Leadership
Favorite FCCLA Memory: Her favorite FCCLA memory is JPS FCCLA Cookie Decorating Night. It was a great way to bond friends and bring together peers who are not in FCCLA.

Jenna Trotman | JP Stevens HS - VP of Public Relations
Favorite FCCLA Memory: Her favorite FCCLA memory is earning a gold medal at the SLC with her friends. Working hard with incredible motivation has earned Jenna's team the opportunity to compete at the 2025 NLC.

Avadhi Baid | JP Stevens HS - Vice President of Programs
Favorite FCCLA Memory: Her favorite FCCLA memory was attending her first State Leadership Conference in 2023. It was her first time competing at such a large conference. This motivated Avadhi to become a state officer.

Planning for the Coming School Year...NOW!

WRITTEN BY JENNA E. TROTMAN, VP OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

With the current FCCLA school year coming to a close, it is never too early to start preparing for the next one! This is a time for you and your chapter to reflect on your highs and lows for this year, and how you can improve next year. Here is a list on how to make the 2025-26 FCCLA school year the best one yet!

1. Reflect!

The great thing about reflections is that they can be alone, with a partner, or in a big group. The end of the school year brings a good time to reflect on the different aspects of FCCLA in which you participated. There will be some good and some bad, but you can use this to your advantage to prepare for next year. If you have the chance, invite your chapter to think about these topics:

- Conferences (SLC, FLC, NLC)
- Membership
- Community Service Participation
- Fundraising

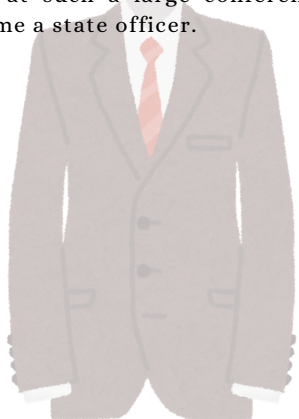
2. Plan!

Now that the year is coming to an end, don't wait until the summer to start preparing for the coming year! There is so much that you can do between now and the beginning of the school year to have a successful year. Think about what you did this year and its success. This can be applied to anything- from chapter fundraisers to what you need to get 1st place gold in conferences. Take this time to meet with your chapter adviser(s), and brainstorm a few things that your chapter can do to improve.

3. Take Action!

Once you've reflected and made a plan, it's time to put those ideas into motion. Start small- maybe planning for a fundraiser in the first week of school, reaching out to potential new members, or helping with preparations for your chapter's first meeting in the fall. Whatever it is, taking initiative now can make the transition into the new school year smoother and more exciting. The more you do now, the more confident and prepared you'll feel when school starts.

By reflecting, planning, and taking action, you're setting your chapter up for an incredible 2025-26 FCCLA year. Remember, great things happen when you stay organized, stay connected, and stay passionate. Let this be the year your chapter reaches new heights!





DARE TO DREAM... OF THE 2025 NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE!

**LUCAIS ROMO, NATIONAL VICE
PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMS**

The annual National Leadership Conference, this year taking place in sunny Orlando, Florida from July 5 - 9, has all the components of a dream conference! Among the innumerable opportunities for networking with your fellow members from across the country; competing in STAR and Skill Demonstration Events; and exploring innovative workshops from your peers, advisers, and industry professionals, NLC will provide you with the chance to celebrate your successful year in FCCLA and dream of all the possibilities for the coming year.

NLC is always packed with activities. Using the handy "Whova" app, with details to come for all attendees, your chapter members and advisers can plan your personal itinerary. Your schedule will include general sessions, time to explore the annual Expo to find industry partner booths, Red Talks, and presentations, and your competitive event presentation time. Among these mainstays are exclusives for this year!

Kicking things off with our Keynote Speaker, Alton Fitzgerald White is sure to stun! White, known for his iconic role as the original Mufasa in Broadway's *The Lion King*, will help you cast a vision for a life filled with passion, purpose, and positivity. Next, a special event fitting for our magical leadership styles, is Universal Studios. What's better than exploring this theme park with your chapters and meeting famous figures from hit movie franchises? Exclusive access to the park! That's right, FCCLA is offering its members private access to make the most magical memories. Finally, the famed After-Party is shifting outside the conference center. NLC will wrap at the Aquatica Water park in SeaWorld with an Aqua Glow Party!

In addition, there are many youth opportunities being offered to passionate members like you to elevate your experience. Consider applying to join the Content Creator Program, share your projects at FCCLA Chapter showcase, walk in the annual Fashion Show, lead our conference as the National Anthem singer, or commit to a career as an FCS educator at the Say Yes To FCS Signing Ceremony. Applications for all youth opportunities close May 2. Explore fcclainc.org or contact the state officers with any and all questions. Make memories, step out of your comfort zone, and join thousands of FCCLA members for our biggest event of the year. The National Executive Council is excited to see you in Orlando!



SEVEN SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR NEXT SWIM

**LUCAIS ROMO, NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT
OF PROGRAMS**

Whether your summer plans will take you down to the shore, to far off islands, or the National Leadership Conference in Orlando, Florida, taking part in water activities can always pose risks. Preparing with the right items and habits can help you have enjoyable, memorable, and safe, fun in the sun.

Stay Hydrated! Always carry a reusable water bottle if you can and routinely drink water. Enjoying the heat and sun must be accompanied with lots of water to prevent dehydration.

Wear sunscreen and reapply! Sunscreen can lower your risk for skin damage and illnesses that can arise from unprotected sun exposure, but it must be worn properly. Always read your brand's labels. Expired sunscreen should never be worn. Follow the instructions for reapplication on the container. Always put on a new layer of sunscreen after swimming and remind others joining you to do the same.

Swim in a group! Even if you, your friends, and your family are in a familiar swimming spot, it is best to never swim alone. In the event you get too tired or need help, you will never regret swimming in a group.

Know your limits! Swimming is a great form of exercise and a great leisure activity; however, getting caught up in the fun can lead to accidents. Taking a break is a good time to reapply sunscreen, drink water, and have a snack. Breaks can also prevent exhaustion, cramping, or injury in the water. Reflect on the confidence level and strength of your group and agree upon when you'll return to the sand or sidelines.

We can all hear the famous rule: "No swimming until thirty minutes after eating." Even if the window of time varies, this statement's validity is undeniable. Swimming immediately after eating can induce cramping which could lead to injury and drowning. Take substantial time out of the water after your meal or snack.

Abide by rules of the pool, beach, or lake. Follow the lead of lifeguards by listening for announcements and warnings. Flags on beaches indicate safe zones. Stay between the green flags when swimming. While tricks and diving can be fun, community pools are too shallow for this kind of play.

Rip currents can appear suddenly in ocean waters. Your natural instinct would be to swim against the current dragging you out to the deeper water to make it back to the sand. You will expend all your energy before you beat that rip current. Always swim parallel to the beach until the current passes. Checking online rip current trackers can help you choose a safe time for a day in the ocean waves.

Put these seven tips into practice next time you go swimming. After enjoying time in a public swimming space, be sure to clean up after yourself and others. If your chapter is interested, consider a beach or lake clean-up for a sunny service activity to complete in the spring or early summer. The warmer weather awaits you, so go make a splash!

UPCYCLING DENIM: GIVING OLD JEANS A NEW LIFE

BY: MISHREE PATEL, VICE PRESIDENT
OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Denim is a fashion staple, but its production comes with a high environmental cost—thousands of liters of water, chemicals, and energy go into making just one pair of jeans. Upcycling offers a sustainable and creative alternative, turning worn denim into something both useful and beautiful.

Instead of discarding old jeans or jackets, upcycling allows you to reimagine them into entirely new pieces. Here are some specific, inspiring ways to transform denim:

1. Denim Tote Bags

Old jeans can become sturdy, fashionable tote bags. Simply cut off the legs, sew the bottom closed, and use leftover fabric or the waistband to make handles. These bags are perfect for groceries, books, or everyday use.

2. Patchwork Quilts

Create a cozy, rustic quilt by cutting denim into squares or shapes and stitching them together. Mixing light and dark washes adds visual interest and makes for a truly unique piece.

3. Denim Coasters

Strips of old denim can be rolled tightly and sewn to create thick, absorbent coasters. These not only protect surfaces but also add a handmade, eco-friendly touch to your decor.

4. Reimagined Denim Jackets

Breathe new life into a plain denim jacket by adding patches, embroidery, paint, or studs. Whether you're going for a bold statement or subtle flair, this is a great way to personalize your wardrobe.

Upcycling denim isn't just about sustainability, it's a chance to get creative, save money, and make something one-of-a-kind. With a few tools and some imagination, your old denim can become your next "go-to" piece.



2025 STATE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE SERVICE RECAP: FCCLA'S COMMITMENT TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE

BY: MISHREE PATEL, VICE PRESIDENT
OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

At this year's State Leadership Conference, FCCLA members from across the state came together to show what it truly means to lead with purpose. Through creativity, compassion, and collaboration, our service initiatives made a powerful impact on both local and national causes.

Thanks to the incredible efforts of our chapters, we collected:

- 107 pounds of pull tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, helping support families with critically ill children.
- 824 hygiene products and \$1,100 raised from our cookie sale for Covenant House, providing care and support for youth experiencing homelessness.
- \$1,800 in monetary donations for AmeriCare, aiding California fire relief efforts.
- 124 skeins of yarn for the Magic Yarn Project, creating whimsical wigs for children battling cancer.

A special shoutout to our Service Ambassadors, whose dedication and enthusiasm were a driving force behind our outstanding results. Their leadership helped mobilize chapters and keep the spirit of service alive throughout the conference.

We'd also like to recognize Ocean County Vocational Technical School for making the most significant contribution to these service initiatives.

Lastly, a round of applause to John P. Stevens High School, who were recognized at SLC for raising the most grains of rice through our Free Rice Initiative from Leadership Bootcamp, turning knowledge into action to combat global hunger.

Thank you to every member, adviser, and supporter who contributed to these efforts. Together, we are proving that FCCLA doesn't just talk about leadership, we live it through service. Through our community service initiatives we are the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America.





SPRING CLEANING

WRITTEN BY JENNA E. TROTMAN, VP OF
PUBLIC RELATIONS

The warm air and chirping birds bring the perfect time to reset your space and your mindset with a little spring cleaning! A fresh environment can boost your motivation, reduce stress, and help you finish the school year strong. Here's a list on how to make spring cleaning a simple and refreshing experience:

1. Start Small

Don't feel like you have to clean everything all at once. Pick one area- your backpack, a drawer, your desk, or even your phone- and focus just on that. Starting small keeps it manageable and gives you a quick win, which can motivate you to keep going. You'll be surprised how much better one clean space can make you feel.

2. Sort It Out

As you clean, make piles: keep, toss, donate, and maybe. If you haven't used it in a while, ask yourself if you really need it. Cleaning isn't just about throwing things away- it's about creating a space that works for you. Be honest with yourself, and don't be afraid to let go of what no longer serves a purpose.

3. Refresh Your Routine

Spring cleaning isn't only about physical spaces- it's also a great time to reset your habits. Maybe it's organizing your planner, updating your to-do list, or setting a new sleep schedule. Clearing out mental clutter is just as important as the physical stuff, and it can help you feel more in control and less overwhelmed.

Spring cleaning is more than just tidying up- it's a chance to breathe new life into your space and yourself. Take it one step at a time and enjoy the fresh energy that comes with a clean space. Whether you're tackling a whole room or just your mindset, you're making progress that counts!

THINGS TO DO TO POSITIVELY IMPACT THE ENVIRONMENT

BY: RIA KOTTESWARAN, VICE
PRESIDENT OF LEADERSHIP

Planet earth is 4,543 billion year old; all the ecosystems, the flora and fauna that thrive in it have all helped create a habit in which we live and thrive. To help conserve this planet and its environment the very first step starts by acknowledging the fact that the world is changing. Climate change has severely affected the environment and will continue to do so. We should take the time to preserve our planet because it is crucial for our survival, providing essential resources like clean water, and food. Here are five impactful things you can do to positively impact the environment.

1. Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle

One of the simplest and most effective ways to help the environment is to follow the 3 R's. Reducing waste, reusing items instead of throwing them away, and recycling can significantly cut down on pollution and conserve resources.

2. Choose Sustainable Transportation

Walking, biking, carpooling, or using public transportation helps cut down on harmful emission from cars. When possible try to walk or bike distances.

3. Conserve Energy

Something as simple as turning off the lights when you leave a room, unplugging devices not in use, and switching to energy-efficient appliances or LED bulbs are small actions that help reduce your carbon footprint and save energy.

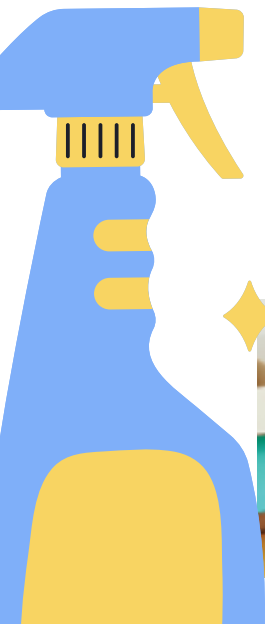
4. Use less Water

Turning off the tap while brushing your teeth, fixing leaks, taking shorter showers, and using water-saving appliances can help conserve water.

5. Support Eco-Friendly Products and Companies

Buying from brands that use sustainable practices, avoid harmful chemicals and use recyclable packaging encourages better business practices.

Helping the environment doesn't always require big changes, small daily actions add up! By being mindful of how we use resources and making eco-friendly choices, we can all play a role in protecting our planet. Every effort, no matter how small, sends a message that we care. Whether it's recycling a bottle, choosing to walk instead of drive, or supporting green companies, our actions today shape the world tomorrow.



less is
MORE.



NJ FCCLA National Program Success!

By: Shridhar Garg, VP of Parliamentary Law

This year, NJ FCCLA members showcased their leadership, creativity, and dedication by participating in FCCLA's National Programs. These programs challenge students to make a difference in their schools and communities while developing real-world skills that last a lifetime.

We proudly recognize the outstanding schools and students who submitted projects for the following National Programs:

Career Connection

- John Adams Middle School
- John P. Stevens High School
- Edison High School



Community Service

- John F. Kennedy High School
- Southern Regional High School



FACTS (Families Acting for Community Traffic Safety)

- John P. Stevens High School



Families First

- Camden County Institute of Technology



Financial Fitness

- John P. Stevens High School
- Edison High School



Stand UP

- John P. Stevens High School
- John F. Kennedy High School
- Southern Regional High School



Student Body

- John P. Stevens High School



In addition to these Program submissions, multiple members from chapters across all three NJ FCCLA regions submitted applications for Power of One, further demonstrating their commitment to personal growth and leadership development. These awards reflect the members' achievements in areas such as self-improvement, family ties, working relationships, leadership, and speaking out for FCCLA.

Congratulations to all the students and advisers involved for your incredible accomplishments. You continue to inspire others and exemplify what it means to be a leader in FCCLA!